

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4079

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9029

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: SPANISH BISHOPS' CONFERENCE SPEAKS OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. THE DECLARATION ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPANISH BISHOPS' CONFERENCE DEC. 22 IN MADRID (WITH, REPORTEDLY, ONLY ONE VOTE CAST AGAINST IT) WAS, NATURALLY, A BASICALLY RELIGIOUS DOCUMENT, TREATING OF THE CHURCH'S DESIRE TO RENEW ITS ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF SPANIARDS. IT WAS ALSO, HOWEVER, POINTEDLY A POLITICAL DOCUMENT, COMPLEMENTING PREVIOUS DECLARATIONS (NOTABLY THAT OF CARDINAL TARANCON AT THE INAUGURAL MASS OF THE KING REPORTED IN MADRID 8366) IN SETTING FORTH THE BISHOPS' GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT AS BOTH A CITIZEN AND AS ONE WHO GOVERNS.

2. THE CHRISTIAN DOES NOT LIVE APART FROM THE DAILY HAPPENINGS OF THE SOCIETY TO WHICH HE BELONGS, THE DECLARATION SAYS. HE MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE, IN ALL THEIR VARIOUS ASPECTS IN CIVIC LIFE. AND TO ACCOMPLISH THIS HE MUST HAVE THE LIBERTY TO CHOOSE WHATEVER IDEOLOGY SEEMS BEST TO HIM, PROVIDED IT DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE TEACHINGS OF THE GOSPELS. THE CHURCH REMAINS INDEPENDENT AND NO PARTICULAR POLITICAL IDEOLOGY CAN CLAIM LEGITIMATION FROM HER. TO THIS END THE CHURCH RENOUNCES ALL HER PRIVILEGES WHICH HAVE "TARNISHED" HER PREACHING OF THE GOSPELS AND CALLS FOR A REVISION OF THE CONCORDAT.

3. THE DOCUMENT STRESSES PARTICULARLY THE NEED FOR A SENSE
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OF JUSTICE IN ALL ITS APPLICATIONS AND MENTIONS SPECIFICALLY

NUMEROUS INJUSTICES IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY TO BE REMEDIED: THE LOW SALARIES OF MANY WORKERS AND THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THEIR EARNINGS AND THOSE OF THE PRIVILEGED CLASSES, THE LACK OF BASES OF PARTICIPATION BY THE WORKERS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR COMPANIES, THE CONCENTRATION OF RICHES IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY OR IN FEW HANDS. THE DOCUMENT CALLS FOR AN AMNESTY AT THE ENDING OF THE HOLY YEAR FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND ALL POLITICAL EXILES AND FOR A REVISION OF THE LAWS RESTRICTING THE EXERCISE OF CIVIC LIBERTIES.

4. COMMENT: SILVA MUNOZ, LEADER OF THE UNION DEMOCRATICA ESPANOL, RECENTLY TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD HEARD IN ROME THAT THE VATICAN FEARED THAT THE SPANISH HIERARCHY WAS DRIFTING TOO FAR TO THE LEFT IN ITS OUTSPOKEN DEMANDS FOR WHOLESALE POLITICAL CHANGE IN SPAIN. ALTHOUGH THE SPANISH CHURCH DECLINES TO TAKE SIDES IN POLITICS, IT IS OBVIOUSLY ON THE SIDE OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND CONSEQUENTLY, IS A MAJOR POLITICAL PROPONENT OF CHANGE. THE HIERARCHY HAS MADE ENEMIES WITH RIGHT WING LEADERS SUCH AS BLAS PINAR AND OTHERS WHO GO SO FAR AS TO ACCUSE THE HIERARCHY OF PROTECTING COMMUNISTS WITHIN ITS RANKS. EATON

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